

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 5, 2010. Claims 1, 3 to 10 and 20 to 22 are pending in the application, with Claims 1, 10 and 20 being in independent form. Claims 1, 3, 5, 10, 20 and 22 have been amended. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3, 6, 8 to 10 and 20 to 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0035968 (Higashikata); Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Higashikata in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,190,485 (Couwenhoven); Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Higashikata in view of Couwenhoven, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,058,207 (Tuijin) and U.S. Patent No. 7,102,785 (Tamagawa); Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Higashikata in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,172,692 (Huang); and Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Higashikata in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,739,828 (Moriyama). Reconsideration and withdrawal are respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 1 as amended generally concerns a color processing method of determining a combination of color material signals of a plurality of kinds of color materials for reproducing a color represented by an input color signal designated by three color signals. The method comprises using a processor to perform the steps of obtaining a plurality of combinations of color material signals, each of the combinations being capable of reproducing a color represented by the input color signal, and setting a function which represents a relation between color signals of target colors that change from white to black and a total use amount of the color material signals and in which a change in the total use amount of the color material signals of the input color signal is continuous

with a change in the color signals of the target colors that change from white to black, wherein the function is set based on a color signal of the target colors corresponding to a color represented by the input color signal and a total use amount of the color material signals of the target colors. The processor further performs the steps of calculating the total use amount of the color material signals corresponding to the input color signal by using the set function, and determining the combination of color material signals corresponding to the input color signal in the plurality of color material signals based on the calculated total use amount of the color material signals.

Thus, among its many features, Claim 1 provides for (i) setting a function which represents a relation between color signals of target colors that change from white to black and a total use amount of color material signals and in which a change in the total use amount of the color material signals of an input color signal is continuous with a change in the color signals of the target colors that change from white to black, wherein the function is set based on a color signal of the target colors corresponding to a color represented by the input color signal and a total use amount of the color material signals of the target colors, (ii) calculating the total use amount of the color material signals corresponding to the input color signal by using the set function, and (iii) determining the combination of color material signals corresponding to the input color signal in the plurality of color material signals based on the calculated total use amount of the color material signals.

By virtue of the foregoing, it is possible to set a combination of color material signals by which the total use amount of the color material signals change continuously, and to prevent the total use amount of the color material signals from rapidly changing relative to a change in a gradation.

Turning to the applied references, Higashikata, Couwenhoven, Tuijin, Tamagawa, Huang and Moriyama are not seen to disclose or suggest at least foregoing features (i) to (iii), nor the attendant benefits provided thereby.

The Office Action directs attention to paragraph [0058] of Higashikata in reference to foregoing feature (i). In particular, it is alleged that “a total coverage restriction function T can be designated/set to determine the total use amount for example by setting to 200%”. See Office Action, pages 4 and 5.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that the total use amount disclosed in Higashikata is a fixed value. For example, paragraphs [0102] to [0103] and Figure 12 of Higashikata are seen to show that function T corresponds to a fixed value.

Further in this regard, Higashikata is not seen to disclose or suggest the setting of a function at all. Applicants respectfully submit that in Higashikata, a value of K is first determined, values of CMY are then determined, and it is judged whether or not the determined values exceed a total use amount of the fixed value. As such, the total use amount in Higashikata is not a function but is rather a fixed value.

Accordingly, Higashikata is not seen to disclose or suggest (i) setting a function which represents a relation between color signals of target colors that change from white to black and a total use amount of color material signals and in which a change in the total use amount of the color material signals of an input color signal is continuous with a change in the color signals of the target colors that change from white to black, wherein the function is set based on a color signal of the target colors corresponding to a color represented by the input color signal and a total use amount of the color material signals of the target colors, (ii) calculating the total use amount of the color material signals

corresponding to the input color signal by using the set function, and (iii) determining the combination of color material signals corresponding to the input color signal in the plurality of color material signals based on the calculated total use amount of the color material signals.

In addition, Couwenhoven, Tuijin, Tamagawa, Huang and Moriyama have been reviewed and are not seen to compensate for the deficiencies of Higashikata. In particular, Couwenhoven, Tuijin, Tamagawa, Huang and Moriyama are not seen to disclose or suggest foregoing features (i) to (iii).

Claim 1 is therefore believed to be allowable over the applied references.

In addition, independent Claims 10 and 20 are apparatus and computer-readable storage medium claims, respectively, generally corresponding to method Claim 1. Accordingly, Claims 10 and 20 are believed to be allowable for the same reasons.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims and are believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the claims, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Finally, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner conduct a personal or telephonic interview with Applicants' representative regarding this case, before the Examiner takes this filing into consideration. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact Applicants' representative as indicated below.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

/John D. Magluyan/
John D. Magluyan
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No.: 56,867

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3800
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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